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Efficiency as a Basis for Operation and Wages. By HARRINGTON EMERSON. (New York: Engineering Magazine, 1909. Pp. 172. $2.)

In this book, which is a reprint of a series of essays published in the *Engineering Magazine*, Mr. Emerson has crystallized an idea that has been growing rapidly in recent years, and one that is sure to affect very greatly our industrial methods. Its reading will, therefore, repay any one interested in industrial development.

We are all more or less familiar with the enormous advance in machine processes and the increased production resulting therefrom; but only those who have had actual experience in conducting industrial work under the old military system of organization have any conception of the losses and wastes resulting from inefficient management on the one hand, and more inefficient execution on the other, so common to that system. The object of this book is to show how careful planning, supplemented by the creating of proper incentives to production, may eliminate a large percentage of such losses. Planning departments are not new. The subject has received considerable attention from such able men as Mr. F. W. Taylor, and many planning departments are in successful operation. Mr. Emerson would make the planning system more complete so that the old "line" or "military" organization will be paralleled throughout by a "staff" or planning organization, insuring for each worker the best of expert advice and the best possible surroundings for the work in hand. Undoubtedly Mr. Emerson's philosophy is correct, the extent to which the idea may be successfully carried being dependent on the character of the work.

Exception may be taken, however, to some of the author's conclusions. He says, "Men, women and children starve, not because there is not abundance, not because the few have appropriated the portion of the many, but because of unnecessary waste" (page 15). We have no reason to believe that checking of industrial waste by raising the efficiency of production will affect in any way our industrial balance. The past century has seen the greatest increase in *productive* efficiency the world has ever witnessed; but it has not affected the *relative* position of the worker very materially. The great problem which confronts us is not one of *production* but one of *distribution*. We already produce enough to make us all comfortable if it were properly distributed.

Conservative accountants will not agree with the author in his statement (page 94) that the cost of preliminary studies and investigation looking to the introduction of a more efficient system of production is properly chargeable to capital investment. He states that such expense is capital investment as much as are expenses for patterns and drawings. Viewing capital as that which is actually recoverable it is not safe, except in special cases, to carry either drawings or patterns as an asset, and the most conservative accounting will include these in cost of production. It would take considerable argument to convince the prospective purchaser, or the holder, of common stock, that an expenditure so much more intangible than patterns should be considered an asset.

Considerable attention is given to the ever interesting subject of pay systems, and a bonus system of rewarding labor is outlined. The author's suggestion that by means of more efficient standards of production and of more efficient rewards and penalties we could "in the course of a few generations crowd off the sphere the inefficient and develop the efficient, thus providing a nation of men, good, wise, and industrious," is not new nor startling, as many tribes civilized and otherwise, have applied, Spartanlike, the natural law of the survival of the fittest. It must be remembered however that efficiency is relative, and the elimination of the present unfit or defective class by a general raising of standards, can in no way change the relative percentage of such defectives. There will probably always be a lower layer of humanity. The average man is not lazy, as those know who have had experience with large bodies of workmen. Most men are inefficient either because they are born so, or because they have not been properly trained. In either case they are not altogether to blame, and it is for the latter class that industrial education should be provided. In any case no system of production can be called humane or just that does not provide a place for the man who is willing to do his best, regardless of what his relative efficiency may be. True, this is not in accordance with the demands of modern competitive production. No more is our philosophy of life in accordance with the law of the survival of the fittest; and the above statement must hold true till we change our standards and adopt the Spartan method of relieving our community of the unfit, a change not likely to come in the near future.

Cornell University, DEXTER S. KIMBALL
Sibley College of Mechanical Engineering.

A Tariff History of the Mississippi River System. By FRANK HAIGH DIXON. (Washington: Supt. of Docs., 1910. Pp. 70.)

The above work furnishes an account of the transportation changes on the Mississippi River and its tributaries. It is based largely upon statistical data, secured principally from the records of organized commercial bodies of St. Louis, New Orleans, and other river cities. The work is in two parts. Part I is devoted to conditions before 1860, and treats particularly (1) the situation before the time of steam, (2) the steamboat and its competitors, (3) Ohio River commerce, (4) Upper Mississippi commerce, (5) Missouri River commerce, (6) St. Louis, (7) canal-lake competition, (8) rates and fares, (9) speed and accidents, (10) the beginning of railway competition. Part II considers the decline in Mississippi commerce since 1860, and takes up (1) the Civil War and the railroads, (2) Ohio River commerce, (3) Upper Mississippi commerce, (4) St. Louis, (5) Missouri River commerce, (6) Lower Mississippi commerce, (7) summary.

The crafts used for transportation upon the Mississippi system have changed much with time and circumstances. Before 1800 almost any device was employed upon which goods could be floated down stream. After 1800 the flat boat came into general use; it was cheap, carried large loads and could be sold for lumber at its destination. About 1810 the steam boat was introduced; at first this met with slight success, but after 1820 came into active competition with the flat boat, and soon carried the bulk of the traffic. Since 1860 the tow boat, leading a fleet of barges, has become the characteristic mode of conveyance; there are usually 25 barges in a fleet, carrying altogether 25,000 tons of traffic.

The growth and importance of the traffic before 1860 appear from the following figures, showing for the year designated the